

Countryside Trinity Church Connections

October 9, 2020



From Pastor Brant...

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
--Philippians 4:6-7

These verses, found near the end of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, are to me such beautiful words of encouragement. In them I find myself being invited into the very heart of God; to constantly direct towards God my deepest needs, trusting that God will respond. It brings to my mind images of sitting in someone's lap when I was a kid, being rocked back and forth, with arms embracing me, and snuggling in to get as close as I can. And in those moments I feel safe enough to share those things that are both wonderful and scary; the excitement of riding my bike through a puddle or climbing a tree; the hurt of a being pushed down in the playground or getting bitten by red ants. It's inviting to me.

I find that people interpret this passage to mean that worry in itself is wrong. I would dispute this. Worry is what we do. It is an elemental part of our humanity. Without worry we'd have been an ignorant group of folk wandering into every bear cave and lion's den without thinking about the consequences. Without worry we end up on YouTube videos that go viral as people split a gut over something stupid we just did. When a person can imagine all sorts of responses to the situations in which he or she finds him or herself, when we can see real threats to our well-being and even existence all around us, worry seems like a proper response. Worry, after all, has its upsides. Worry gets us going, gets us out there so that we can limit as many of those threats as we possibly can. We worry about what we are going to eat, and so we plant in the spring and water and weed and ward off the animals and insects who want to consume what we have planted along the way. We harvest and then can or freeze or pickle to preserve for colder times. We use the energy of our worry to address the issues we can address. We worry about our health, so we go for walks or runs or bike rides or practice yoga, and we seek out health insurance, so that we can find help in managing our health. We worry about our children, so we call and we write and we listen and we even stay silent because that too is a helpful response in parenting. Worry in itself isn't the problem. The issue is to get so caught up in our worry that we move into places where don't belong, where our worry consumes us and leads us to forget our place in God's world.

In Paul's invitation to us to participate in the gift of prayer, he invites us to share our concerns and requests with God. What is promised is not necessarily the fulfillment of these requests. What is promised is peace, the peace that passes all understanding, the divine peace. It is this peace, the one that is a clear signal to us that we are in God's loving care, that enables us to use our anxiety and its energy well. This is what allows us to stop worrying so much about our concerns and to focus our concerns on the needs of others. When we know the true rest that is offered to us through our relationship with God in Christ, we then begin to worry about others. This passage reminds us again that prayer doesn't so much change the world around us as it changes us and allows us to make the small changes this world needs to experience so that people are themselves less anxious about their situations.

We will soon get to gather again to enjoy our communal worship. There won't be a fellowship hour in which we sit around the table and share our joys and concerns. There won't be the singing that connects us emotional and spiritually around the blessings of God. To some degree we will experience the love and encouragement that keeps us moving forward in our different ministries. God's open embrace is not impacted by this virus. God is always present to hear our heart-felt concerns, to listen with an understanding that is deeper and more graceful than we can ever imagine. Crawl up into God's lap and share whatever is on our heart. Wait to see how God will respond. Luxuriate in the peace that is beyond our understanding.

I hope to see you soon, though there will be some sadness. I will not be able to shake hands and give hugs. I will only be able to wave to you from at least 6 feet away. I will not see your smiles behind your masks, and you won't see mine. Know that I am looking forward to the time when we can celebrate the goodness of God in all the different ways that bring us joy.

Take care,

Brant

Indoor, In-person Worship to Recommence, Sunday, October 18th

At a meeting on October 6th, the Session, in response to the loosening of restrictions by the Governor for inside gatherings, authorized the recommencing of in-person worship to start on Sunday, October 18th. The guidance from the state for safe public gatherings is to limit them to 20% of capacity, which means for us 40 people. Once we meet this capacity, the fellowship hall will be opened where the live stream of the service will be shown on the monitor there. The protocols listed below numbered 1 to 13 in the section titled "*Sunday Morning Showings of our Recorded Service at 10:30 AM*" will be used for this service as well.

There will be plenty of instrumental music, but no live singing.

You will be instructed to sit in designated seating in your household groups which will have some flexibility, depending on the size of your group. Your willingness to follow our guidelines will help to insure a more inspirational worship experience for all involved.

The pastor will not be wearing a mask while speaking. He will be behind a Plexiglas shield to protect worshippers. Any comments about this set up should be kind and gentle.

Sunday Morning Showings of our Recorded Service at 10:30 AM

Beginning on Sunday, October 11th, the sanctuary will be opened to a limited number of people for those who want to watch the recorded worship service for the week. In the last newsletter it was reported that there would be a limit of 9 in both the sanctuary and the fellowship hall to watch this recorded service. Because of the change in the Governor's restrictions up to 40 people will be seated in the sanctuary for this event, again with overflow available in the fellowship hall. If you want to participate, please follow these guidelines:

1. Reservations are no longer required. The sanctuary will be filled on a first come, first served basis, as household groups. Once filled, people will be directed to the fellowship hall.
2. Please come in and exit through the center doors. The doors on the East side of the building will be locked in order to make sure everyone is screened.
3. Masks are required. They are an essential element in keeping one another safe, especially in indoor spaces with limited air movement.

4. Participants will be screened prior to admittance. Questions will be asked concerning his or her present state of health and possible exposure to the virus through others in the last 14 days.
5. Temperatures will be taken using an infrared thermometer and those with high temperatures will not be permitted to attend.
6. You will be asked to use the hand sanitizer on both your way in and your way out.
7. There will be no Children's Time during the service or Sunday School after the Children's Time.
8. Participation will be recorded that we might, if needed, contact participants about possible exposures following the service.
9. There are designated seating areas in the sanctuary. Please fill the front areas in first.
10. There will be baskets at the back of the church in which to put your offering either before or after the service.
11. You are to remain seated until you are dismissed. Upon dismissal please do not stop to socialize, but move directly and quietly outside.
12. There will be no social time following the service inside the buildings. You are welcomed to socialize outside if you wear masks and keep appropriate physical distancing from one another.
13. The service premieres at 10:30. Please come early to give yourself time to go through the screening and seating processes.

Improvements of the Manse and Church

Improvements on the manse to prepare it for being put on the market continue. The painter has completed his work and a new garage door and opener will be installed this week. Thanks to Chuck Davis and Roger Scovill for their work.

Thanks to Buildings and Grounds for replacing the water heater for the bathrooms. As we prepare to return to worship, the bathrooms off of the sanctuary will be unisex. We are grateful for those who gave up a Saturday installing the new water heater so that we can insure that vigilant hand washing with hot water can take place.

Ed and Lori are safely back from Utah, where they visited with their son Rob. Ed is back at work making our property look great. Thanks, Ed.

Financial Report

Your faithful giving empowers us to continue our witness to the work of Christ in the world as it allows you to strengthen your relationship with God. Our goal for October is \$8,500. Please remember you can make an online donation through our app, and if you need help with this, or if you want to run your donation by the church, please call the church office. Our online service includes its usual time of thanksgiving and dedication for our gifts, so you may want to have your money and envelopes or perhaps even your phone ready so that you can more fully participate in this time.

Christian Outreach

Please remember our local ministries during this time, as they work to provide additional resources to our community in this time of pandemic and need your support.

Crop Walk

This year's CROP Walk will be a virtual event, which means that you are invited to set up your own walk either as an individual, or as a group following social distancing guidelines. As you walk, please remember those in this world who have to walk miles to find clean water, food, and



safety. Also take the time to think about those who might be dealing with difficult issues within the houses and apartments you walk by. What concerns come to your mind? What prayers would you offer on their behalf? You can donate online, or make your checks out to CWS (Church World Service). You can also place your donation in the basket during Worship services through the month of October.

To find our more go follow link: <https://resources.crophungerwalk.org/virtual-walks/>

Online Worship on Sunday Mornings at 10:30 on YouTube CTC Saginaw

We continue to place on our FB public and group pages our order of worship for the day, and we are hopeful that it will enhance your worship experience by offering the words to the hymns and other parts of the service so that you may participate more fully.

It is not the same as being here. We recognize it and continue to pray for the end of our forced isolation due to the virus. We believe God can and use this time to strengthen our ministry, if we seek God's guidance and consolation in this time.

We ask that you are patient with us as we work out the kinks in the technology and learn the finer details of creating audio visual presentations. If you have feedback about any of our digital outreach content, we'd love to hear your gently phrased criticisms.

We ask that you continue to be in prayer for the volunteers who provide assistance for our services, as well as for new volunteers to step up for these positions. If you have an interest in serving in the ministry of the gospel as a camera person, a computer assistant, or a worship planner working with media, please contact the pastor so that you can review the job description and the responsibilities of these positions.

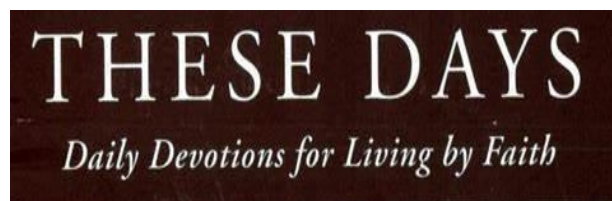


Greeting Cards: Shirlee Scovill continues selling cards each Wednesday but has moved into Fellowship Hall for the cooler months. She will be there on Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Proceeds from the sale of these cards will support the mission work of the Women's Association. The only vegetables available for the next few weeks will be winter squash and possibly pumpkins. If you would like either of these, contact Shirlee prior to Wednesdays so she can have them available for you.

Please wear a mask and remember to practice social distancing. The cards will be self-service with a container for the money at the tables. Shirlee will be there to answer questions. Shirlee has kept busy during the time we have been home and, therefore, has many cards to choose from – Birthday, Get Well, Sympathy, Thinking of You, Wedding, Anniversary, Retirement, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Hope to see you on Wednesdays in the near future.

Facebook Prayer Group: We have created a FB Prayer Group on our newly created FB Page. It is a private group where only those who are invited can see the messages posted for those in need of prayer. If you are on Facebook and would like to be invited, please call Kathy in the office so she can invite you to join.

Don't forget to let Kathy in the office know about any change of yours or a family member's address, phone numbers or email addresses so she can update the church records and mailing lists. Please email changes to countryside@ctcsaginaw.com or leave a message at 989 793-0125. Thank you.



These Days: We have received the October-November-December edition of the *These Days* magazine and they will be in the box outside the east entrance door if you would like to pick one up.



Birthdays & Anniversaries

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Zachary Plater
- 2 Drew Pequignot
- 2 Dan Groom
- 3 Joseph Ruth
- 5 Mary Longstreth
- 6 Amanda J. Groom
- 11 Dick Easlick
- 13 Ethan Parker
- 13 Ruth Marsh
- 13 Charlotte Armstrong
- 13 Jerry Paquette
- 14 Mike Yusaf
- 14 Tania Yusaf
- 16 Randy Groom
- 17 Elizabeth Jacob
- 19 Christopher Davis
- 22 Jean Anne Miller
- 22 Pat Denno
- 25 Ezra Yusaf
- 26 Ashley Huizar (Scovill)
- 25 Aaron Plater
- 27 Marie Lemmer
- 29 Scott Jacob
- 29 Lori Halase

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Paige Pequignot
- 3 Sam Nolan
- 7 Judi Westendorf
- 7 Christine (Dowling) Greenwood
- 8 Duncan Redfield
- 9 Stephanie Plater
- 10 Anjel Vernon
- 11 Dave Fitzgerald
- 12 Jacob Plater
- 15 Dick Woodke
- 16 Pervez Yusaf
- 19 Martin Bethune
- 19 Bethany Scovill
- 20 Judith Lorenz
- 21 Ronald Miller
- 22 Jacob Groom
- 22 Lucas Gonzales
- 23 Virginia Jarvi
- 28 Jennifer Nolan-Heyn
- 28 Avis Leach

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Rhashell Hunter
- 8 Garth Westendorf
- 12 Melissa Paterson (Shalhoup)
- 16 Alexa Mahan
- 17 Nancy Easlick
- 18 Paula Plater
- 22 Ed Halase
- 24 Nancy Scott
- 25 Brecque Woodke
- 26 Craig Gates

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Aaron & Paula Plater
- 8 Robert & Marie Lemmer
- 10 Eric & Sue Smith

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 17 Jerry & Virginia Brachear (1962)
- 22 Dave & Dora Fitzgerald (2014)

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 15 Joseph & Doris Ruth (1956)
- 24 Bruce & Patricia Denno (1984)
- 27 Dick & Nancy Easlick